

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
/070 W

-----001349 221425Z /53

O R 221345Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0907
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3420

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OVIP (TODMAN, TERENCE A.), SHUM, PINT, PA
SUBJ: ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
STROESSNER

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR
LANDAU, MET FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR WITH PRESIDENT
STROESSNER AUGUST 17. FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES ALSO ATTENDED.

2. PRESIDENT STROESSNER EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT AMBASSADOR
TODMAN, NOTWITHSTANDING HIS CROWDED SCHEDULE, HAD
BEEN ABLE TO VISIT ITAIPU, THE SITE OF CONSTRUCTION OF
THE WORLD'S LARGEST HYDROELECTRIC PLANT. HE THEN TURNED
TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND OUTLINED THE HISTORY OF
COMMUNIST INFILTRATION INTO PARAGUAY FROM ABROAD WHICH
HAD PLAGUED THE COUNTRY EVER SINCE 1947 AND REACHED ITS
HEIGHT DURING THE PERIOD OF 1959/1960. WHILE HE ADMITTED
THAT NO SUCH THREAT EXISTED AT THIS TIME, HE STRESSED
THE NEED FOR CONTROL TO AVOID THE THREAT OF SUBVERSIVES
ENTERING FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. THE PRESIDENT
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PICTURED PARAGUAY AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TARGETS OF
COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA EMANATING FROM MOSCOW AND HAVANA.
THEIR RADIO STATIONS, HE SAID, HAD ZEROED IN ON PARAGUAY,
DESCRIBING IT AS A REPRESSIVE COUNTRY IN WHICH,
AMONG OTHER REPREHENSIBLE ACTIVITIES, GENOCIDE OF INDIAN
TRIBES SUPPOSEDLY IS PRACTICED. HE SAID HE KNEW THAT
THIS OUTRIGHT LIE HAD BEEN PICKED UP IN THE UNITED STATES

AND HE WAS THEREFORE PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT PROFESSOR RICHARD ARENS, THE AUTHOR OF THE RECENT BOOK GENOCIDE IN PARAGUAY, WAS FINALLY COMING TO PARAGUAY FOR THE FIRST TIME TO SEE FOR HIMSELF WHAT WAS HAPPENING. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PUT ALL NECESSARY FACILITIES AT ARENS' DISPOSAL TO GO WHEREVER HE WANTED AND TO MAKE ANY INQUIRIES HE DESIRED.

3. AMBASSADOR TODMAN EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AT HAVING BEEN ABLE TO SEE PARAGUAY'S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT DURING HIS TRIP TO ITAIPU AND APPLAUDED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO OPEN ALL DOORS TO PROFESSOR ARENS AS IT HAD DONE RECENTLY FOR AMBASSADOR STEPHANSKY WHO CAME AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO LOOK INTO THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. TODMAN SAID HE HOPED THAT AS A NEXT STEP THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOW GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO AN IAHRC VISIT WHICH HAS BEEN PENDING FOR QUITE SOME TIME AND WHICH THE GOP HAD NEITHER APPROVED NOR DENIED. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THIS VISIT WOULD HAVE ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. FAILURE TO PERMIT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS, HE SAID, CALLED FOR SANCTIONS UNDER THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1976.

4. IN REPLY, PRESIDENT STROESSNER OFFERED THE SAME
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ARGUMENTS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN AMBASSADOR LANDAU ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS: THAT PARAGUAY HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH THE VISIT BECAUSE THE GOP HAD NOTHING TO HIDE BUT THAT IT COULD NOT BREAK SOLIDARITY WITH THE NEIGHBORING STATES, PARTICULARLY BRAZIL AND URUGUAY WHICH HAD COME OUT STRONGLY AGAINST SUCH VISITS. BRAZIL, IN FACT, CONSIDERS VISITS OF THIS NATURE AS AN UNWARRANTED VIOLATION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. STROESSNER SAID HE WAS NOT AGAINST THE VISIT BUT THAT THIS WAS NOT THE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR THE IAHRC TO COME. HE WOULD KEEP AN OPEN MIND REGARDING A VISIT AT A LATER DATE. THE PRESIDENT ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS UNHAPPY THAT THE U.S. HAD APPLIED PRESSURE IN THIS MATTER BY HOLDING UP LOANS FROM INTERNATIONAL LENDING ORGANIZATIONS.

5. AMBASSADOR TODMAN EXPLAINED THAT OUR ACTIONS WERE IN LINE WITH THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1976 AND SINCE THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING AGAINST THE VISIT PER SE, HE HOPED THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT BE COERCED BY PRESSURE FROM BRAZIL AND OTHER COUNTRIES TO DELAY HIS APPROVAL FOR THE VISIT. AMBASSADOR TODMAN SUGGESTED THAT IF THE VISIT WAS NOT

CONVENIENT AT THIS TIME FOR LOCAL DOMESTIC REASONS, E.G., UPCOMING ELECTIONS, THE PRESIDENT COULD GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT NOW FOR A VISIT AT A LATER MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE DATE. TODMAN ALSO ASSURED THE PRESIDENT THAT THE IAHRG WAS A RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATING GROUP AND THAT THE GOP COULD EXPECT FAIR TREATMENT FROM THEM.

6. IN REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY PARAGUAY SHOULD BE THE FIRST COUNTRY TO BE VISITED BY THE IAHRG WHEN SO MANY OTHERS HAD MUCH WORSE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS, AMBASSADOR LANDAU MENTIONED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HAITI HAD JUST AGREED TO PERMIT AN IAHRG VISIT. STROESSNER SAID HE WAS NOT MUCH IMPRESSED BY THAT BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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BE COMPARED TO THE DUVALIER REGIME.

7. AT THE END OF THE DISCUSSION, WHICH AT ALL TIMES WAS VERY CORDIAL, STROESSNER STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. ASCRIBED TO THE VISIT AND WOULD KEEP THE MATTER UNDER REVIEW UNTIL THE RIGHT TIME COULD BE FOUND.

8. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN.
LANDAU

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